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ABSTRACT

An effective recruiting program is one that locates the best candidate available, makes an acceptable job offer, and retains the new employee for at least eight years. Successful recruiting results from a department chair's commitment to a people-oriented administration. By being aware of the career paths of faculty members, the chair can anticipate vacancies and formulate plans before the need arises. The recruitment process, which should employ a search committee, involves several steps: (1) receiving notification of a vacant position; (2) receiving authorization to recruit; (3) determining salary; (4) organizing the recruitment effort; (5) screening applicants' files; (6) conducting campus visits; and (7) making an offer. It is important that all applicants be treated fairly. Once the position has been filled, it is the responsibility of the department chair to make sure that the new person is retained through orientation, professional development, counseling, and mentorship. This document includes a nine-item bibliography and an order form for related research reports available from the Association for Study of Higher Education including the full report upon which this summary is based. (DC)

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FYI

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Faculty Recruitment, Retention, and Fair Employment: Obligations and Opportunities examines the central issues and processes of recruiting and retaining faculty in the context of managing human resources and the principles of fair employment. It focuses on the needs of department or division heads, but it would be useful to any college or university administrator with responsibility for recruiting faculty. The department or division chair can blend the following procedures into the policies and practices of any institution. Although a small department might be able to recruit faculty in a much less detailed manner than outlined in the report, it is still likely to face the same issues and problems.

The report is organized by the stages of the recruitment process: receiving notification of a vacant position, receiving the authorization to recruit, determining salary, organizing the recruitment effort, screening applicants' files, conducting campus visits, and making an offer. It concludes with the factors needed to retain qualified faculty: orientation, professional development, periodic counseling, and mentorship.

Why Is Recruitment Important Now?

The central focus of the report is recruitment, but serious recruitment without an awareness of the factors that encourage faculty to stay once hired could result in wasted effort. Both the department and the candidates could be losers (DuVall 1976). An effective recruiting program is one that locates the best candidate available, who is made an acceptable job offer and then stays in the department 8 or more years, developing a productive career and benefiting both the institution and himself. The report recognizes the hard new realities of academic employment:

> There simply aren't going to be position openings to advance all our causes. We can't support a steadily aging tenured faculty *and* extend the retirement age *and* create many opportunities for younger minorities and women faculty at the same time (Linnell 1979, p. 1).

Clearly, recruiting faculty is not going to become any easier. Each vacancy that occurs in the early 1980s may be the last one for a long time (Fernandez 1978; National Science Foundation 1981). Linnell reports the possibility of only 6,400 new doctoral positions per year from 1983 through 1998, plus a much larger "churning" of non-tenured faculty between institutions (1979, p. 5). The new Ph.D.s in this latter group have been termed "gypsy scholars," indicating that they will take almost any academic appointment, anywhere, for whatever duration (Hechinger 1982; Yarrow 1982). Department heads and other academic administrators need to be especially open and forthright with these people, whether they are hired for full-time, part-time, or temporary positions.

Successful recruiting results from a department chair's commitment to people-oriented administration. The chair must collect information about the career status of each faculty member to be able to estimate retirement dates and other conditions that project the future need for faculty. Plans can therefore be made before the need to hire new faculty arises, and principles of affirmative action can be made part of those plans.

Planning for What?

Vacancies open for many reasons—an institution's desire to maintain a fixed student-faculty ratio, demographic and market changes, retirement, involuntary separation, refusal of promotion and tenure, incompetence, moral turpitude, contract termination without prejudice, voluntary separation, departure by mutual consent, disability, and death. A chair who understands the career paths of faculty can understand and even predict likely changes in the department's instructional staff. These changes provide many opportunities to reshape a department, and they may be as important as recruiting new faculty. For example, a chair might face pressure from women, minorities, and gypsy scholars to remove incompetent faculty to make way for the next generation of faculty.

Planning the recruitment program involves several steps. Usually a dean must approve the decision to hire a new person before any action can be taken. The position must be reviewed so that its next occupant meets the needs of the college and the department. Institutional policies must be examined, affirmative action guidelines reviewed, and decisions made about any special efforts to recruit minorities and women. A department may have to show evidence of its commitment to equal employment opportunity, including goals, timetables, and written plans to contact sources of potential applicants. The salary for the position should be reviewed; it may be possible to hire part-time faculty or to create two positions when the vacant position was filled by a highly paid faculty member. Reviewing the salary also allows the institution to ensure that salaries are equitable regardless of the new member's race or sex.

The department chair should appoint a search committee to recruit new faculty. The search committee can define the professional characteristics each candidate should have. It must establish policies (within institutional guidelines) about special cases—the criteria for ineligibility, nepotism, hiring alumni, late applicants, for example. The committee can prepare an announcement of the available position and decide where to send the information. Arrangements need to be made for setting up applicants' files and interview records, confirming data about race and sex, and so on.

How Should We Sift, Weigh, and Judge?

Once the closing date is past, each applicant's file must be screened, first to determine which ones do not comply with the institution's and the department's recruitment policies. Those applicants who were given some preferential attention should be noted and then treated no differently from other applicants. A second review of applicants' files should determine those whose applications conform to the advertised requirements for the position. The applicants who barely missed being declared eligible should be identified and retained for one more evaluation. This surviving group—all those who are eligible plus the marginal applicants—should now be considered nominees, and the search committee should rank the most outstanding nominees. The final group of three to five applicants become the candidates for the position.

The department chair and the search committee next begin a final round of telephone checks of references and credentials. The dean must approve bringing some or all of the candidates to the campus for personal interviews. The chair can begin negotiations with the candidates over the telephone, clearing up any questions and extending an invitation to visit the campus, deliver a lecture, and meet with faculty and administrators. All those who talk to the candidates should then evaluate them. The data for each candidate are compiled and presented in aggregate form to the search committee, which recommends the best candidates to the department head. After conferring with the dean, the department chair offers the position to the best candidate. The records of the search must be retained for 3 years.

What Are Fair Procedures?

The content and form of the announcements of the vacancy must be fairly presented. All persons interested in a position should be given the same set of instructions for submitting a complete application. Applicants known to the faculty should be identified; if they are said to have special qualities not sought in the announcement, all applicants should be surveyed for those qualities.

A department wishing to change the percentage of its faculty who are minorities or women can do several things. It can decide and publish the most desirable goal for percentages; it can determine the geographic origins of its faculty and students and decide where it would be appropraite to recruit new faculty; it can prepare a plan with dates for achieving major goals; it can keep adequate records showing the efforts made to seek out applicants. Institutions with affirmative action plans can provide guidelines for departments; otherwise, a department must make its own commitment and carry it out.

After Recruitment, What?

The fair procedures and due process to be observed are part of a sound program of managing talent. The procedures require that faculty be consulted regularly, that jointly negotiated assignments be determined, that criteria and methods of evaluating faculty be made explicit, and that each faculty member have an opportunity to participate in a continuing professional development program. Counseling to help faculty correct deficiencies and opportunities to develop needed skills should be available. All expectations for performance must be made explicit, and each faculty member must be given an adequate chance to develop professionally.

Recruiting is only the first step; keeping faculty is another matter. After their arrival, faculty need to be apprised of the formal terms of the contractual relationship. The department head is largely responsible for designing development programs that will aid new faculty to become successful professionals. Formal orientation and career counseling can help new faculty understand how decisions are made in the department and institution. Established faculty and their spouses can help newcomers adjust to the new community.

A chair would do well to understand why one person might accept a job offer and another would turn it down. He can benefit by knowing why faculty move to other institutions. A department chair should consider the concept of mentorship, particularly for women and minorities. With the appropriate planning and sensitivity, a department can recruit fairly from among all races and both sexes and build a quality faculty.

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